

Polk County
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**250 ACRES
BURNED**

EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Steve Roberts flies a helicopter to fight the fire on Ohms and Fishback roads from the sky on Friday afternoon.

More than 250 firefighters from 22 agencies respond

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Smoke filled the air on Friday afternoon after a combine sparked a 250-acre field fire off Ohms Road near Fishback Road and Monmouth Highway.

Fire departments from 22 different agencies attacked the blaze on all sides. A helicopter unit with the Oregon Department of Forestry fought the fire from the sky.

Residents were under voluntary evacuation orders by the Polk County Sheriff's Office, with the recommendation to gather any animals and leave the area. An emergency shelter was set up at Central High School by the Red Cross in case it was needed. More than 250 fire-



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Apparatus from 22 fire agencies from Yamhill, Benton, Polk and Marion counties quickly responded to and battled a 250-acre field fire sparked by a combine on Friday.

fighters tackled the fire. None were injured. No residents reported injuries, and no livestock was reported in-

jured. The call came in just after 2 p.m. on Friday, and the fire was under control about

four and a half hours later, said April Welsh, Dallas Fire and EMS community services. In total, firefighters were on scene for about 10 hours to ensure no hot spots reignited.

"It was incredible how many apparatus showed up," Welsh said. "That kind of response just facilitated that fire getting under control, going from one point of not having containment to in an hour having 90 percent containment."

At one point, the fire began to spread to nearby timber, but was never considered a timber fire. A "finger fire" began spreading away from the main location toward the staging area on Monmouth Highway, where firefighters arrived for directions.

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IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS NEWS

In years past, the Old Timers Reunion in Dallas brought hundreds of people to Dallas City Park each August.

The Dallas Area Visitors Center, which organizes the tradition going in its 53rd year, would like to see it regain those numbers.

In recent years, the attendance has been closer to 50 people.

"It used to be a huge thing, 200 to 300 people," said Bonnie Dreier with the Dallas Area Visitors Center. "I don't know if we can bring it back, but we are going to try."

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FALLS CITY NEWS

Last year's summer of trouble in Falls City's parks doesn't appear to be repeating itself. In fact, a group of residents are working to improve the environment in the town's three parks this summer.

Activities in the parks — particularly near the Little Luckiamute River falls — were a point of contention with residents last year, with drinking, loud music and people carrying guns the most common complaints. Falls City Mayor Terry Ungricht said city hall has gotten calls from residents living next to the parks who are concerned about troublesome and possibly illegal actions taking place.

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INDEPENDENCE NEWS

The city of Independence wrapped up a new parks master plan, which was presented to the city council on July 14.

"The big shiny piece is the riverfront," said Shawn Irvine, economic development director. "Part of the reason we (the city) purchased the Valley Concrete site was to maintain control of the riverfront."

The city owns 2-1/2 miles of land along the Willamette River, and whoever buys the Valley Concrete site will have to allow public access, Irvine said.

"We want to extend (trails) to the south, ideally out to the island," he said.

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MONMOUTH NEWS

Some ride for pleasure. Others to get into shape. For those taking part in Bike MS, which takes place Friday through Sunday at Western Oregon University, they are riding for a purpose.

"A lot of bike events are just about getting on our bike and riding," Bike MS Manager Amy Harris said. "More than that, this ride is about supporting people with multiple sclerosis (MS). Many of the people who ride with us either have MS or love someone who has MS or has a family member with MS."

MS is an often disabling disease that affects the central nervous system.

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POLK COUNTY NEWS

In 2014, the timber harvest in Polk County fell, following a statewide trend.

Polk's overall harvest declined from approximately 161 million board feet to 150 million board feet, according to an Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) report. A board foot of lumber measures one foot wide, one foot long by one inch thick.

Statewide, the overall harvest decreased 1.74 percent to approximately 4.13 billion board feet, making 2014 the second consecutive year Oregon's harvest has been more than 4 billion board feet.

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Dancing in the Rain



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Dancers from M.O.M. Dance Company don't let a little rain stop them from dancing in the parade on Saturday.

**THE NEXT
7
DAYS
PLANNING
FOR YOUR
WEEK**



wed

World's Finest, a reggae and bluegrass band, will fill Main Street Park with music as part of Music in the Park. 6:30 p.m. Free.



Sunny
Hi: 97
Lo: 60

thu

Kids activities, music, food and fun will be at Christ's Church's second annual summer block party. 6-8 p.m. Free.



Sunny
Hi: 100
Lo: 64

fri

Check out the "Huge \$6 Sale" fundraiser benefiting the West Valley Hospital Volunteers and local high school seniors. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Free.



Sunny
Hi: 98
Lo: 60

sat

Interested in owning a horse, or already do? Old Mill Feed & Garden hosts the horse owner's workshop today. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free.



Sunny
Hi: 95
Lo: 58

sun

Mel Brown and Friends perform a free evening of jazz at Main Street Park to kick off the annual jazz camp. 5 p.m. Free.



Sunny
Hi: 92
Lo: 57

mon

Today is National Grab some Nuts day. What better way to support Polk County's filbert farms than by picking up some nuts?



Sunny
Hi: 90
Lo: 58

tue

It's National Night Out, when communities gather to stand together with law enforcement against crime. Times vary. Free.



Sunny
Hi: 89
Lo: 57